MUTINY

A PAPER OF
ANARCHISTIC IDEAS
& ACTIONS

#57 DEC 2010 / JAN 2011

IN THE ZINE THIS TIME..

We interview Wollongong Students Against War

Assembly for Dignity outline the recent changes to welfare

A leaflet by locals outraged at a racist mural in Newtown

+ Reviews of Climate Camp, the Breakout Conference & From Empire to Commonwealth: Communist Theory and Contemporary Praxis

Editorial

Where is the December zine, you ask? Well, there ain't one. Sorry folks, but after 56 issues of non-stop monthly zine-making, this small and underfunded collective finally dropped the ball. If you love the zine & want to help us out, get in touch! We're an open collective and would love to have new members involved.

In this issue we include an interview with Wollongong Students Against War about the origins and demands of their occupation of the Defence Materials Technology Centre on October 20th, as well as leaflets from recent protests and organising in Sydney and further afield. There's a leaflet from comrades in Queensland organising against changes to welfare laws, and from an anti-racist demonstration against an Islamophobic mural on our very doorstep in Newtown.

We also include reviews of three recent events, Climate Camp, the Breakout conference and the 'From Empire to Commonwealth' conference.

We hope that by publishing these interviews, reviews and leaflets we will contribute to the processes of reflection and discussion in the anti-war, anti-racist, environment and refugee movements as well as around radical practice more generally. By providing information about diverse collectives involved in exciting initiatives we hope that this issue of the zine will deepen solidarity and foster collaboration between activists involved in a range of struggles.

In the next Mutiny, there will be an article about the Peoples Castle, a squatted council owned building in Redfern that was recently evicted. Also, we look forward to the 2nd half of an interview with Gabriel Kuhn and Dave Kerin on syndicalism and a first-hand report on the student revolt in England.

Love and solidarity, Mutiny collective xx

EDITORS FOR THIS MONTH: Brassy F Gnoll, L Dog, Mambutu Nizwa, Phoenix, Syzygy.

Mutiny is an anarchist collective based in Sydney. We meet regularly, contact us on
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web: back issues at www.jura.org.au/mutiny.

(The mutiny zine collective does not necessarily agree with all the opinions of contributors. Contributors do not necessarily agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective. The mutiny collective doesn't agree with all the opinions of the mutiny collective.)

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NEWS BRIEFS

Victoria

Twenty-nine protesters were arrested on December 13th outside a Visy cardboard manufacturing plant in Melbourne's south-east as a strike there entered its 10th day. Workers were striking over pay and conditions for casual workers. Almost 400 workers at Visy cardboard manufacturing sites in Victoria and NSW began the indefinite strike at 6am on Friday, December 3. Protesters lined the entrances to the Dandenong plant, with some camping out overnight. Workers were forcibly removed from the picket line on the morning of the 13th and taken away in divisional vans. The dispute at the Visy factory in Dandenong had been ongoing for more than a week over a new enterprise agreement with a picket at place at the site. Visy won a Supreme Court injunction on Friday 10th to allow access to and from the site.

Aotearoa/New Zealand

18 defendants from the Aotearoa/NZ 'terror raids' of October 15th, 2007 in which Maori, anti-war and anarchist activists were arrested in dawn raids, will face trial by a judge only, being denied a jury trial. Despite the highest lawyer in the country, Solicitor-General David Collins, saying in November 2007 that there was no case under the Terrorism Suppression Act more than three years later the crown continues to pursue the arrestees. These changes to the criminal justice system are criminal. Part 1 of the Criminal Procedures Bill, passed under the previous Labour government in 2007 gave the Crown the right to apply for trial by judge alone. Previously only a defendant could request this. Now the government is intent on further removing the right to a jury, the right to silence, the right against self-incrimination, and has just taken away the right to vote for all prisoners. More info at http://october15thsolidarity.info/

United Kingdom

On 9 December tens of thousands of students took to the streets in Scotland, Newcastle, London and elsewhere in the UK to protest higher education fee increases. The largest rally, the third major rally in central London, saw thousands march through the city to Parliament square. Here protestors lit bonfires, threw placards, missiles and fireworks at the police and tried to break through police lines and fences separating them from parliament. Protestors broke 5 or 6 windows of the Treasury building, climbed on top of a police van, and painted 'NO' in red paint on the lawns of parliament square. Prince Charles's car was attacked with protestors breaking a window and splashing it with paint. Around 22 protestors were injured, some having to be treated in hospital for head injuries. Jody McIntyre, a protestor who was dragged from his wheelchair by police twice during the demonstration, said: 'people must have been asleep all their lives if they don't realise this is the police's role at demonstrations – to protect the interests of the government and the state'. Students have been occupying universities across the UK, with Leeds and University College London students in the second or third week of occupation in the lead-up to the protests. The vote to allow universities to triple tuition fees to nine thousand pounds has been passed in both houses of parliament.

Spain

Air traffic controllers went on an unsanctioned strike on Friday 26th November, calling in sick to protest working hours and the government's imposition of austerity measures. The Spanish government imposed emergency measures for the first time since 1975 to force the controllers to return to work. Facing the threat of prison, strikers began to return to work on 4th December after emergency measures were declared. During the strike, hundreds of flights were cancelled and an estimated 250,000 people were affected.

London, UK

Fired by Harrods from his job as the toy department's Father Christmas, a disgruntled employee took revenge in spectacular style. Gaining access to a maintenance control room, Lloyd Hudson, 35, from Ilford, Essex, was able to locate the chart and corresponding switches for Harrods' 10,000 external lights. Barricading himself in, Hudson altered the lights to spell out fuck off! He was removed by security guards after an hour, then handed over to police.

"Honestly, I am disgusted," said Irene Rider, 59, from Gary, Indiana. "I was with my grandchildren. We had just gotten off the bus. I said 'look everybody' and pointed up to the lights – but you know what the lights said? They said f**k off. And that is not an appropriate message for a child. At least not at Christmas time." However, Mutiny Zine reckons this behaviour is awesome!

Italy

After Berlusconi won a vote of confidence in Parliament, protesters took to the streets in Rome on December 14th to protest against the Gelmini reforms [to Italy's education system] and the government. Demonstrations started in the morning and went on till late afternoon. 100,000 protesters have been estimated in Rome, including students, precarious workers, factory workers, social centres, migrant groups. Milan and Rome in particular have seen scenes of total urban guerrilla warfare. In Rome protesters tried to break into the Parliament buildings and were violently charged by the police. Riots went on for hours in central Rome and blocked the whole city centre. According to Italy Indymedia 41 people were arrested and 57 injured among the police. Alemanno, Rome's right wing mayor, and his close friends from the right wing party Alleanza Nazionale, were seen around enjoying the charges and the beatings. In Milan protesters invaded the Stock Exchange, and attacked banks, party HQ's and other buildings. Protests have also been held in other European countries by Italian students studying abroad.

Greece

On December 16, more than 100,000 people marched in central Athens against a freshly-voted labour relations law and the austerity measures imposed by the government and the European Union/ International Monetary Fund/ European Central Bank. This was one of the largest demonstrations Athens has seen in recent times. Street-fighting erupted across the city, which saw chaotic scenes for hours. Barricades were erected across Patision Avenue, which leads to the Polytechnic School; waves of demonstrators arriving at Syntagma square, outside Parliament, fiercely fought with the police. An – eventually unsuccessful – attempt by demonstrators to occupy the building of GSEE (the country's mainstream trade union) saw people fighting off the notorious Delta motorcycle police. Two of their bikes were set ablaze. As always, more info, analysis and videos at www.occupiedlondon.org/blog.

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE CHANGES TO WELFARE?

Recently the Federal Government passed the Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Welfare Reform and Reinstatement of Racial Discrimination Act) Bill 2010. This bill is a massive change to the provision of welfare in Australia and represents an attack on the conditions and dignity of all of us who are on benefits, and the rest of us more broadly. Under the manufactured hysteria of the 'Intervention' in the Northern Territory, the previous Federal Government introduced racist welfare income management. That is, the restriction of where and on what people can spend their welfare payments. The current government has now passed legislation that has the potential to extend this to all of those on welfare in Australia, with $500 million being allocated over five years to fund these changes.

THE BASICS

From the 1st of January 2011 income management will have the ability to roll out welfare quarantining across the country. In these areas there will be four categories of people who will have their income managed by Centrelink.

CATEGORY ONE

Those of us aged 15 to 24 who have been in receipt of Youth Allowance, Newstart Allowance, special benefit or Parenting Payment for more than 13 weeks out of 26 weeks. Those of us in this category are designated 'disengaged youth'.

CATEGORY TWO

Those of us on Newstart, special benefit or the pension for 52 weeks out of 104 weeks. Those of us in this category are designated 'long-term welfare payment recipients'. People in these two categories will have 50% of their welfare quarantined.

CATEGORIES THREE & FOUR

Those of us referred for income management by child protection authorities and those of us assessed by Centrelink social workers as 'vulnerable' will have 70% of their payments quarantined.

How do I know if Centrelink thinks I am vulnerable?

It seems that this will be determined by a Centrelink social worker. The social worker will see if you are "experiencing an indicator of vulnerability", whether you are failing to meet your "priority needs" or those of your partner or children and whether your "total circumstances could be assisted by income management, having regard to other services and mechanisms available." All this is very vague, what it means is that a social worker will have the power to determine, on the basis of your life style, how much you might spend on drinks or going out, what kind of child care your kids have and if you wash your hair or not, if you are 'vulnerable' and thus will have your income quarantined.

100 % of all one-off lump sum/one off payments will managed. These monies will only be able to be spent by using a 'basics card' (like an eftpos card) and you will only be able to spend the funds at certain stores and on certain products. You will only be able to spend this money on things the government deems as 'necessities'. You will be prevented from spending any of this money on alcohol, gambling, pornography etc.

It is possible to be exempt from welfare management if you are in the first two categories and studying full time, are a new apprentice, if you have worked 15 hours per week for at least 26 weeks, if you are undertaking "an activity specified in an instrument made by the Minister" or if you apply to be exempt. At the moment it is unclear on what grounds you can apply and who will make the decision. If you are in the last two categories you can't apply for

exemption.
If you have children dependent on you, you can only be exempt if your children have had no more than five unexplained days away from school in each of the two semesters, that they are in appropriate schooling and are progressing in their studies or your child is 'participating in an activity specified by the Minister'.

THE BACKGROUND

Unemployment is a natural and desired part of Capitalism – its function is to enforce competition for work, keep people subordinate and drive down wages in order to keep the system going. When we struggle against unemployment we go to the heart of Capitalism – it exposes the fact that most of us only have our labour to sell.

This legislation shares the common, but deeply incorrect, idea that unemployment is somehow the fault of the unemployed. It is based on the idea that it is unemployed people's attitudes or lack of skills that is the reason that there is unemployment. However, as the recent global financial crisis has reminded us, unemployment is caused by structural factors in Capitalism. There is always a certain level of unemployment (otherwise Capitalism could never grow) and the movements of investment and rates of profitability means that sometimes businesses open and sometimes they close. While capitalists and bureaucrats have some level of choice and room to move under Capitalism, the majority of us have nothing to sell but ourselves – our time and our ability to work – and have no option but to rent ourselves out to survive. Those of us whose ability to work is the only source of profit find work when it is plentiful and struggle when it is not. The competition between workers for jobs, whether there are plenty of jobs to be had, or few and far between, works to push down wages by playing us off against each other.

Any attempt to make us compete for work allows bosses to attempt to offer the lowest possible wages. This is the motivation for this legislation: Australia faces a labour shortage which works to keep wages high. The government is hoping to make the lives of those on welfare more miserable in an attempt to tighten the competition for jobs in an effort to lower wages and increase profits.

Unemployment is not a major problem in this society; if anything the problem is overwork.

Capitalism's response to current levels of unemployment has been an attack on conditions and work stability – many of us are now on contracts and work as casuals.

The average full-time worker in Australia works 70 minutes of unpaid overtime a day— that is 33 full eight hour days a year. As a society we give over 2.14 billion hours in unpaid overtime, worth $72 billion as a present to employers. Whilst some of us struggle to find work, others struggle to find time away from work. The majority of so many people's lives are taken up with making a wage in work that is often dangerous, stressful, boring, exhausting, pointless and frustrating. Every society has to do a certain amount of work to maintain a decent standard of living, but the way we are organising work has very little to do with something worth being called living.

It is no surprise then that some people faced with the possibility of crap work for often crap pay may decide not to work. It's actually pretty sensible. Life should be lived with dignity and dignity often has to do with the ability to work in a meaningful way – but maybe not flipping burgers or doing telemarketing.

Faced with the choice of working for wages barely above the poverty line, or having

some time and welfare payments, are politicians surprised we sometimes choose the latter?

Capitalism hates when the unemployed refuse to act like the unemployed as it drives down its ability to exploit and reproduce itself.

Despite work for the dole and other attempts to control people, the underemployed and unemployed have always found alternative ways and loopholes to resist domination. When unemployment was high a certain section of the class – often young – used welfare payments as a way of refusing work and social restriction to spend time on more rewarding pursuits. (The entire Australian music scene has been subsidized by Centrelink). The ability to live a bearable and sometimes pleasurable life on welfare has provided a powerful reservoir of autonomy.

Those outside of wage-labour are still 'productive'. Many of the jobs that are offered to us are stupid and many things that happen outside of wage-labour are actually very productive. The most obvious (though often forgotten) example is house-work; the work that traditionally women have done, and have often received little or no credit for, the work of raising kids and caring for people. This is the very work that holds society together.

And this is why quarantining is being extended to those on Youth Allowance, New Start, Parenting Payments and Special Benefits. It is about extending discipline to all of us, those on the dole, those with jobs, those studying, those who do carework, those raising kids. All of us.

Beyond this, unemployed people are put to work and exploited by Capital all the time. Unemployed people are often those very people who are creating the types of creativity that companies use to directly sell their products. So many of us are being put to work all the time! Not to mention how those on benefits function as fodder being shuffled around by the Sarina Russo's* of this world! No wonder in Europe there is a social struggle to demand a living wage for everyone, whether they have employment or not!

While the media continues to construct the poor as an 'other' to suit its particular goal – whether as 'scandalous', 'immoral', 'lazy' or 'vulnerable' – it also continues to invoke the mythical demons responsible for poverty, usually represented as single, unintelligent and promiscuous with children. Recipients of welfare are publicly humiliated and degraded to such an extent that all of us become much more willing to submit, and are encouraged to fear benefits and accept crap, low waged conditions. Welfare quarantining thus represents a new technique for the state to engineer public consent, as well as to track and render those receiving benefits into a transparent and policeable totality.

Centrelink has very little to do with our welfare; welfare assistance is not the product of kindness from our benevolent masters – it is first and foremost a product of class struggle and it must be maintained through struggle. This is important in that while it is possible to be exempt from these changes welfare quarantining is not a threat that can be avoided individually; We can't ignore the government's push for us to accept more work and worse conditions. Our welfare and the meeting of human need – even of the non conformist – should not be an appendage to society. We have to shake off the identities that Capital has forged for us – as interchangeable tax payers, producers and consumers – and reclaim our positions as active, dignified human beings.

Stay tuned for more....
by the Assembly for Dignity
assemblyfordignity.wordpress.com

** Sarina Russo is a Queensland employment agency.*

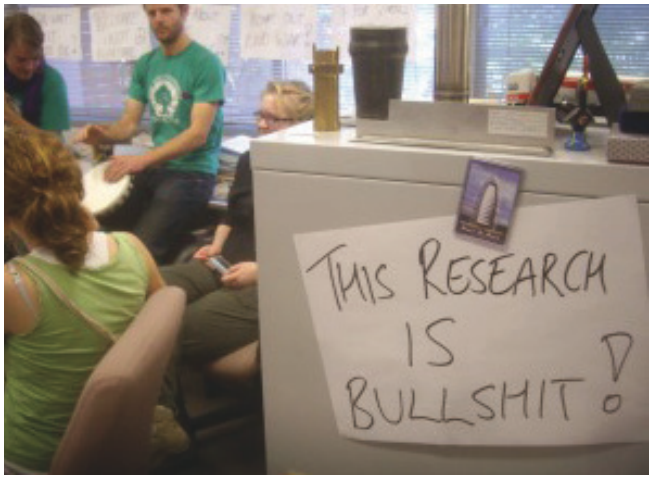
Occupation! Interview with Wollongong Students Against War

On October 20th 2010, activists occupied the University of Wollongong's Defence Materials Technology Centre, a military research facility on campus. In December we interviewed members of the Students Against War collective about the protest. More information about the collective is available at www.studentsagainstwar.wordpress.com

MZ (Mutiny Zine): We heard that there were three groups involved in this action. Who are you and what do you do?

SAW: Students Against War (SAW) is a collective at the University of Wollongong (UOW) that formed in 2003 during the mobilisation against the war in Iraq. It had become inactive in recent years but started up again early in 2010 at the initiative of a couple of keen, radical anti-war students, and has built up to a core of about ten committed campaigners and a large number of supporters. One main reason for the collective's revival is the presence on campus of a military research facility known as the Defence Materials Technology Centre (DMTC) which since 2007 has been conducting metal and materials research for the Australian and US military. The DMTC is funded to the tune of $85m over seven years, partly by the federal government and partly by corporations, including the world's biggest arms dealer, BAE Systems. BAE has been exposed bribing officials to secure arms deals with some of most reprehensible military regimes on earth. The DMTC includes five universities: the University of Melbourne, RMIT, Swinburne, the University of Queensland and UOW.

The other groups involved in this action were the Enviro collective, who have an active presence on campus and meet weekly during semester; and a recently formed student group called Save UOW Music, formed in response to the uni administration's announcement that they will axe the music program at the end of 2010. There is some cross over of students



in these groups, particularly between SAW and Enviro, as you might expect, but the action was primarily organised at the initiative of Students Against War.

MZ: **Was there much discussion amongst those involved about what the action would look like before it happened & did it run smoothly?**

SAW: We discussed the action at a couple of meetings in the month leading up to the action, what we hoped to achieve, the efficacy of direct action etc. Several participants met

on the Sunday before the occupation to plan the event in more detail. On the day of the occupation about a dozen participants formed as a group near the target. While we assembled a camera crew from WIN News arrived as a result of a press release we put out the previous day. We spoke to them briefly, then we headed to the office of the DMTC which was open and easily accessible. Unbeknown to us on another part of the campus the uni administration building was in total lockdown with a heavy security presence in anticipation of our action. So we went right in and took over control of the DMTC offices. Adjoining the front office was the office of Prof. John Norrish who is in charge of the program at UOW, so we occupied his room too. Norrish, who was not in his office, soon arrived and we had a cordial discussion which was captured on camera, with him defending the program and us pointing out his complicity in a military war machine. A few of us had met with Prof. Norrish some months previously at his invitation. He seemed to form the impression that we were a bunch of naive and misinformed students and he wanted to set the record straight about his program. He's kind of politically moderate and liberal, part of what Noam Chomsky has called the liberal intelligentsia: civil servants and state planners who calmly and dispassionately design military hardware and execute wars of conquest with devastating results.

We occupied the office unhindered for the best part of two hours before leaving of our own accord feeling that our point had been made. Shortly after we first went in campus security arrived on the scene as we anticipated. We expected them to quickly call the police after we made it clear that we weren't going to leave, but they didn't. Instead they patiently waited outside the office, trying to determine how long we were planning to stay. The last time an occupation occurred at UOW was in 2004, which was undertaken by queer students. They were protesting for space on campus; they occupied a building on campus for three days until riot police smashed their way in and arrested everybody in the early hours of a Saturday morning. This was captured on camera and widely reported and it became a PR disaster for the university administration. As a result the queer students quickly won all of their demands. We speculated that this may have been in the minds of the university hierarchy who were careful not to take action that could be seen as heavy-handed and draw further attention to the issue. Whatever the case, we felt that the occupation was extremely successful in highlighting our issues and we felt highly energised by the action.

MZ: **You mention putting out a media release. Was it worthwhile using the mainstream media to convey news of the occupation?**

SAW: While it is clear that in general the mainstream media plays the role of promoting a corporate agenda in society, it is also the case that the system is not monolithic and all-pervasive and it is possible to get some range of opinions heard. The media we spoke to were regional, South Coast outlets and it happened that, not for the first time, we got a fairly good hearing. The WIN News report that went to air that night (which can be viewed on the SAW blog) was quite reasonably framed and not at all hostile to our actions.

By the same token SAW recognises the importance of communicating to other radicals, activists and like-minded people using the media that we ourselves create such as zines, blogs, video, etc. A number of SAW participants regularly read and

(sometimes) distribute Mutiny and admire the effort and the consistency of the editors in bringing out this quality publication.

We cannot control how the mass media will frame and depict our campaign work. As we become more successful in building support for our campaigns we will surely receive more criticism and attacks from the establishment media - we are under no illusions about that. But given the wide reach of the corporate media and its importance in influencing many people's views, if we can use it in certain instances to get our message out there or just try to limit the damage they inflict on us by presenting our side of the story, all the better.

MZ: **What were your demands and how effective was the action?**

SAW: The demands Students Against War have adopted are that the university terminates its relationship with the Defence Materials Technology Centre, permanently bans the undertaking of research funded by or for the purposes of any military organisation or arms manufacturer, and institutes an undergraduate subject dealing with the successful history of popular non-violent action (mass strikes, rallies, occupations, etc) in bringing down authoritarian regimes. We feel that the final demand is particularly important, as many students, while opposing the idea of the military research and war generally, feel that there is still ultimately no alternative to organised mass violence as a form of defence; it would be enormously useful to have a subject looking at cases like the defeat of the 1920 military coup in Germany through a general strike, the non-violent toppling of the Marcos dictatorship in the Phillipines in 1986, the Iranian revolution in 1979, amongst many others. Even better would be if we could grow large enough to independently organise our own unofficial, voluntary subject on the same topic, free and open to anyone to participate in.

The action was not intended to achieve any of these aims by itself, but we feel that the best way to bring about a ban on military research at UOW is by us directly bringing this research to a halt ourselves. As our campaign grows larger (keep in mind we only started up nine months ago and our first few meetings consisted of two people) and as more of these type of actions take place, it will become progressively more difficult for the university to continue the research, both literally, because we'll be increasingly interrupting the work, and politically, because we intend to draw as much attention and negative publicity to it as possible.

We felt the action was successful as the beginning of this process. It was us demonstrating our own strength, our own ability to directly bring about change by ourselves, without relying on representatives or attempting to meekly persuade decision-makers to change their minds. It was a radicalising and inspiring experience to realise that we could do this, that we didn't need anybody to do it for us. The

mood amongst our group as we marched out of the office was exhilarating, and we've ended the year with extremely high morale and high expectations for 2011.

MZ: Obviously these actions don't occur by themselves, what has it been like to organise in Wollongong?

SAW: Wollongong has a long and proud history of industrial militancy and radical working class organising. More than in a lot of places, people in Wollongong feel a strong sense of solidarity and support for the underdog. People organising in this town realise this when they campaign on progessive social issues and build links with the broader community. Their message often falls on fertile ground. Being a regional centre, unlike a large city, it also has the tendency of mostly avoiding bitter, sectarian divisions but rather brings together people from different political perspectives to work for a common cause, since we can't afford the luxury of fighting amongst ourselves. That's not to say that it hasn't been hard work. Focusing on campus based activity, we have found that many students, at least at first glance, have little interest in or awareness of the political and social issues we are talking about. Even now very few students at UOW are aware of the military research facility that exists on their campus, though that is slowly changing. Like any kind of campaign work it takes time and dedication to raise people's awareness and build a grassroots movement capable of effecting real change, but this year SAW participants feel very proud of our efforts which have met with significant success if we compare it with the situation 12 months ago.

On the whole, the experience has been largely positive. Realistically, to begin the year with just two members and end it with a committed core of ten people - many completely new to activism - and to have put on several highly successful and well attended events, distributed thousands of leaflets and posters, appeared in dozens of media items, and concluded the year with an occupation – that's a quite extraordinary success for a group that, until extremely recently, did not even exist!

MZ: What do you work to ultimately achieve?

SAW: Ultimately we want to be part of a mass movement that puts a stop to all war. In practice this means bringing down the entire global state-corporate-military infrastructure. We've touched on these issues in discussions amongst ourselves but we haven't discussed them at length. While many, though by no means all, active SAW campaigners would probably describe themselves as anti-capitalist, we don't have a defined position beyond what our group's name suggests we stand for. Currently a key objective for our group is to expose the DMTC program with a view to putting a stop to this pernicious research and replace it with something socially useful such as non-military forms of social defence. UOW is lucky to have on campus an academic with anarchistic politics by the name of Brian Martin who has written about non-violent "social defence" as an alternative to military and armed conflict. His ideas have proven useful to SAW in posing an alternative to what the state tells us is necessary - a military defence system in the form of a standing army. Military systems have virtually nothing to do with national defence, even if that were a notion worth promoting, which it isn't. Ultimately the aim of any military system is to act as a deterrent to dissent and to control people by force.

Say no to dumbass racists!

The following text was distributed leading up to, and during a demonstration against the racist mural, held on Sunday 19th December. Armed with a banner reading 'Say No To Racism', around 40 people from the neighbourhood gathered at the mural, which was guarded by a handful of Australian Protectionist Party members. Another demonstration has been called for January 16th, meet at The Hub at 1pm.

Over 2 months ago some fuckwit artist put up a mural on the side of their business, which originally said 'ban the burqa' with an image of a woman in a burqa crossed out. This has now been changed to the equally regressive 'say no to burqas' with a more simplistic outline of a woman in a burqa. It plays up to the most populist form of racist bullshit that exists in Australia, and worse still it is in a position where it can be viewed by 1000's of people passing on the train line each day. This mural in Newtown has created a situation where Muslim women in particular, and to a degree other non-white people, will feel intimidated about being in this area, as it suggests an acceptance of such racist ideas.

Sergio has claimed that his mural is a political intervention into the trajectories of 'contemporary Australian society' - that this painting is an attempt to open a debate about 'fundamentalism'. It is clear, however, that the painting is only a poor repackaging of sexism and racism. This so-called 'opening' of a debate serves only to shut space down with both physical and violent effects. It is doing no more than expressing and increasing the tendency towards Islamophobia and vilification of Muslims – with Muslim women as no more than an object to be contested – that has for a few years been the most fashionable form of racism in this country.

The form that racism takes in Australia is an everyday sort of white supremacy where people are expected to conform to a singular vision of Australian society. This has been a continuous thread throughout colonisation, the 'White Australia' policy and the violence of the current border protection regime. The mural in this place inscribes the functioning of the border into the very lived experience of people in the area and brings with it a persistent threat of potential physical violence. At the same time, even when particular acts of racist violence are not taking place, the sense of intimidation, fear and exclusion that the mural creates is in itself a form of violence.

Sergio articulates one form of patriarchy in the guise of being against what he perceives to be the patriarchy of another culture. The act of determining what is suitable behaviour for others and calling on the government to regulate this is typically authoritarian and patriarchal. Empowerment and liberation are not things that can be prescribed and dictated to others – some people might find these things in affirming aspects of their heritage, others by shedding all such traditional values. An anti-racist and anti-sexist politics of solidarity has to act in common with those that are struggling for their emancipation from a particular condition, not prescribe what their freedom will look like.

Whatever the position of the council on this issue, it is incapacitated because it is inherently tied to a system of private property that both it and the police must uphold above all else. Sergio hides behind the authority he derives from owning that building and by protecting it with security cameras and security guards. So it is up to the rest of us to self-organise and mobilise against this racist presence and to ensure its immediate removal by whatever form people see fit.

** Inset: The mural in it's current form, with it's creator Sergio Redegalli.*

REVIEWS

Breakout: For the Free Movement of People Conference, Redfern Community Centre, December 10th-12th - by Rattus

Nearly 6000 people are currently incarcerated in Australian detention centres. You will probably already be aware of the growing rebellion inside these prisons - mass hunger strikes, breakouts and escapes, riots, self harm and deaths spiking the horrific history of recent times at the borders. Breakout: For the Free Movement of People, a conference organised by the Cross Border Collective in Sydney, was held from December 10th to 12th. The conference marked an attempt to cohere a broader organised response to this situation, through thoughtful analysis of capital's use of borders in these times.

The ultimate purpose of a conference like Breakout should be to develop politics that begins from the antagonisms rife against the border regimes used by capital to divide us. The nexus of these antagonisms is the intersection of various modes of people's movement with discourses upon which the Australian nation-state is built (such as 'the dignity of work' and White Australia). To turn this on its head, excavating the ways capital seeks to divide us with notions of legal/illegal passage, belonging/not-belonging, permanence/temporality is a good place to start to look for ways that people resist these impositions through action. The conference program rolled out panels and workshops that identified the nature of the problem but also looked at the multiple ways that our class is responding at the moment.

Breakout was a successful contribution to ongoing organisation in Sydney. Not least because people from other places on the east coast came to participate, but also because it was a really big meeting which actively named the problem: capitalism. Without speaking for everyone there, generally some points of commonality appeared to be clear throughout the conference. One, that the popular language of "refugees" needs to be confronted with language that refuses to promote a false hierarchy between people fleeing from political/religious and economic conditions, and also other migrants - this is also a way of confronting the liberal-humanist depiction of powerless and desperate peoples who have no agency and need to be 'saved'. Two, that it is essential that people's struggles against capital and border regimes are understood to encompass international students' or 457 visa holders' campaigns for controls against exploitation in the workplace or to be able to stay in Australia, like detainees and inmates' struggles against their incarceration. These are some of the ways people are challenging capital's control over our lives.

Like most conferences, Breakout organisers allocated a couple of hours at the end of Sunday to plan actions for the future. Like most conferences, the arbitrary divide between analysis/ discussion and strategy/ action leads to few outcomes, I reckon. Some sparks did fly in the final session albeit without clear plans being consolidated. Whether these sparks come to ignite fires is up to those present. An organised collective confrontation of the 'Say No to Burqas' mural on Station Street in Newtown (facing the western train line) was proposed. A neighbourhood demo has since occurred and a rally has been called for January 16th. It was agreed that a broadsheet on the prison industrial complex focusing on Serco (who currently run on-shore and off-shore Detention Centres as well as other prisons and infrastructure world-wide) would be published. Sydney organisers will certainly have a stronger relationship with RISE (Refugees, Survivors and Ex-Detainees)

Melbourne, as a result of Breakout. And, Cross Border Collective announced an open meeting in January to continue these discussions.

You can still check out the program and readings from the conference at www.breakoutconference.org
If you're interested in getting a reader or getting involved in the Cross Border Collective, email: crossborder.sydney@gmail.com

Climate camp: a prefigurative and powerful action-by Jeremy

In the first week of December, over 300 of us gathered at one of Australia's largest sources of carbon pollution – Bayswater power station in the Hunter Valley. Four days of workshops and discussions covered diverse topics ranging from permaculture to direct action and the politics of carbon pricing. On the final day of the camp we took inspiring direct action that effectively stopped the flow of coal into Bayswater.

Months of advance preparation by climate camp organisers and other collectives meant that those who just turned up (like myself) were able to fully participate. We all got to enjoy and help create a welcoming, safe and well-organised camp space. Everyone got involved, ate really well, and was able to sleep, wash, and poo in comfort. We all also contributed to the powerful day of action. Decisions were made through spokescouncils based on affinity groups and camp 'neighbourhoods'. These functioned really well – thanks to good facilitation and clearly articulated structures. People who arrived as individuals were given opportunities and support to help them join one of the existing open affinity groups or create a new one – which a number of people did.

The camp itself offered a prefigurative glimpse of what a better world could be like – a sustainable community built on solidarity, organisation, freedom and democratic participation. The day of direct action was inspiring and powerful. 130 people pushed over a fence and occupied rail lines (while another couple of hundred cheered and supported them from a little way away). The rail lines were stopped for over eight hours. 12 people locked on, and 69 people were arrested. The action was exciting, spontaneous (we did the opposite of what the cops were expecting) and effective – thanks to careful work beforehand. Organisers had communicated enough information the day before so that people could prepare for what action they were able to take, without giving away all the details to the cops. For many people it was their first climate camp, first direct action and first arrest.

The support of the local Hunter community was also clear. Local Aboriginal Elders gave a strong endorsement of the camp; local coal industry workers spoke at the workshops and forums; local young people came along to some of the night entertainments; and journalists wrote positively about the action in the local paper.

Climate camp further convinced me that the climate movement is the movement of our times. It's big, global and growing. It's urgent, diverse and creative. It's also very anarchistic – politically, organisationally and in action. At climate camp there were many anarchists – both self-identified and not. We set up an anarcho stall with books from Jura and sold dozens of items. There is huge potential for anarchism to support this movement and vice versa. So why weren't more self-identified anarchists there? Why weren't YOU there? I strongly urge you to make the effort next time – it's a commitment well worth it.

For more info, photos, videos and fundraiser details: http://www.climatecamp.org.au/

From Empire to Commonwealth: Communist Theory and Contemporary Praxis; Wollongong 25-26 November 2010 -By Sam Russell

Wollongong has a thing going on with Communism. Apart from the survival of working class militancy in official and unofficial networks, Wollongong is a geographic pole of attraction for a number of young communist thinkers with a shared interest in living freedom. They kindly invited the world and Australia over to talk.

The conference theme was Negri and Hardt's recent books, and from these two themes come forward: time and love. Time is precarious, on edge, teetering into the hands of the boss, or fragmenting into work/buy work/buy. Love is a powerful force for communist unity-and-diversity, for building movements, or it is the "affective worker" whose emotional inside gets turned into the workplace. If capitalism is busy fighting over how wide the physical instinct to smile is, and trying to turn every moment of the day into half-consuming half-working; then the need for a powerful loving set of movements is on the agenda.

Takuro Higuchi presented an incredibly interesting account of promoting Japanese activist networks internationally, ahead of major summit protests. The promotion relied on existing European networks, and forged new networks in Asia. His report gave the impression that we were winning, and that we could tell ourselves how to win. This helped make sense of Elizabeth Humphrey's account of the rise and fall of global justice movements in Australia in the Noughties, where changes in world politics and reliance on a single tactic closed off options for struggle.

Risa Tokunaga, Sonomi Suzuki and Nozomu Shibuya discussed struggles by precarious workers. The struggles were over housing and work in marginal spaces and recognition of employment. Local victories happened. The core of these struggles was the creation of local common bonds built of recognition, respect and survival by a community at the edges and on edge.

Regarding longer term struggle, Annette Macguire discussed hip hop culture and Ella Ryan discussed the Alyawarr People's Walk-Off. In hip hop despite the cycle of working class originality and "selling out", access to fragments of time and culture have been established as economic necessity in the commercial sample and the remix. In creative fields, the opening up of limited public commons is incredibly important, as business as usual has become dependent on some common property. For the Ampilatwatja community, government appropriation of community land by invasion, lease and law created a situation where the community moved themselves into a new space free of law and lease. While national support helped improve this tenuous common, the Ampilatwatja community is still displaced by their choice to fight bad government.

The themes on the communist agenda right now are displacement, and making places. Time being continuously work, and continuously play. Edges, margins, precarious meetings of different struggles. Biopolitical power, affect management and control over the emotional body of workers. And responding to all this strong community love, and building common spaces and common economies.

In this month's Mutiny Zine:

◊ Assembly for Dignity analyse the changes to the Australian welfare system and explain the links between unemployment, welfare and capitalism.
◊ Mutiny Zine interviews the Students Against War collective about the occupation of a military research facility at the University of Wollongong Campus.
◊ Leaflet produced for a demonstration against an Islamophobic mural in Newtown.
◊ Reviews of the Breakout conference, Climate Camp and the From Empire to Commonwealth conference.
◊ Brief News from Spain, England, Italy, Aotearoa/NZ, Victoria and Greece

Above: Students in the UK 'Book Bloc' protest education cuts

Upcoming Events:

Film Screening; 'The Lives of Mount Druitt Youth,' 6pm, Friday, Jan 7th 2011 at Jura Books, 440 Parramatta Rd, Petersham.

Anti-racist rally, Newtown. The Hub, 1pm, Sunday, January 16th. Attack the Islamophobic mural on Station Street!

Anarchist Summer School is coming! In Sydney, February 18- 20th at Black Rose (22 Enmore Road, Newtown) Jura Books and other community venues. For details, check out http://anarchistsummerschool.weebly.com

Fundraiser for Gaza and for indigenous communities, Lowkey and Fear of a Brown Planet, Factory Theatre, 105 Victoria Road, Marrickville. Saturday, January 29th, 7pm.

The People's Kitchen, every Wednesday at Black Rose. Cooking from 4pm, Serving from 7pm. Free Vegan dinner, resist the capitalist diet!